



Invitation: A chance to become part of Australian history, Jul 2001

MEDIA RELEASE

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The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is asking the Australian population to consider taking part in the Census Time Capsule project which will be conducted as part of the 2001 Census of Population and Housing, to be held on Tuesday 7 August.

This exciting project, which coincides with Australia's Centenary of Federation, gives Australians the opportunity to elect to have their personally-identified 2001 Census information kept on microfilm and securely held by the National Archives of Australia (NAA) for 99 years. This information will not be made available to anyone until the year 2100. For previous censuses all names and addresses have been destroyed following collation of census data.

The ABS is encouraging all households to discuss the Census Time Capsule so that each household member's view can be recorded accurately on the census form.

The Census

The Census collects information relating to each person and household in the country. The public expects that the information provided in the Census will be kept confidential. The confidentiality of the information provided is guaranteed under the provisions of the **Census and Statistics Act 1905**.

Statistical information from the 2001 Census, from which no individual or household will be identifiable, will be publicly available from July 2002.

Value of the Census Time Capsule

Information held in the time capsule will be publicly available after 7th August, 2100 and will be accessible to anyone. This could include genealogists who study family trees, historians, social analysts and other researchers in the 22nd century.

According to the nation's genealogists, when the time capsule information is released in the year 2100 it will give families a much clearer picture of their forebears, who they were and how they

lived at the beginning of the 21st century.

Project background

Australian practice has been to destroy all personally-identified information from a census once the statistical processing has been completed. The census information permanently kept by the ABS excludes names and addresses. This practice will continue for those people who do not elect to be part of the Census Time Capsule.

In 1998 the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs released a report, **Saving Our Census and Preserving Our History**. The Government agreed with the report that saving name-identified census information "for future research, with appropriate safeguards will make a valuable contribution to preserving Australia's history for future generations".

The Government also considered that in keeping with good privacy practice and to ensure the current high levels of public confidence in the census are maintained, such information should only be kept for those who explicitly consent on the census form.

The 2001 Census is a particularly appropriate time for the Census Time Capsule Project to be conducted as it coincides with the Centenary of Federation.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Comprehensive file footage vision has been supplied to networks, extra copies are available on request. A CD ROM of high resolution census images is also available on request.

Visit **www.census.gov.au/media** for media releases, articles, fact sheets, images and story angles.

ABS census public affairs staff, both at the National Census Communications Unit in Canberra and in all States and Territories, will help wherever, whenever we can.

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